DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 390 571 PS 023 884

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TITLE Stopping the Violence: Creating Safe Passages for Youth.
INSTITUTION California State Legislature, Sacramento. Assembly Office of Research.
REPORT NO AOR-0555-A
PUB DATE Apr 95
NOTE 50p.; This briefing paper was originally developed in collaboration with California Children's Project, a public policy initiative of the California Elected Women's Association for Education and Research (CEWAER).
AVAILABLE FROM Assembly Publications Office, State Capitol, Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0001 ($4; check payable to State of California; California residents add sales tax).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Behavior Problems; Change Strategies; Child Abuse; Children; Child Welfare; Educational Environment; Family Environment; Family Violence; Integrated Services; Mass Media Effects; *Prevention; Role of Education; *School Role; Social Problems; Substance Abuse; *Violence
IDENTIFIERS Child Safety; *Juvenile Crime; Witnesses to Violence

ABSTRACT

Youth violence has reached explosive levels in California. California youth have become both victim and aggressor. Between 1988 and 1991, youth homicide rates almost doubled. During the 1988-1989 school year, schools officials reported 69,191 student-to-student assaults and confiscated 5,107 knives and guns. State and federal legislation has focused on penalties for perpetrators rather than on methods of prevention. Although additional public funding has been provided for very young children, children and youth 9-15 years of age have been neglected. Some key factors to youth violence are: being victimized and abused at home; witnessing domestic violence; living in unsafe neighborhoods; enaging in substance abuse; having easy access to guns; watching television violence; and dealing with poverty and high unemployment in their families. Violent behavior is often associated with other problem behaviors. Two California state programs, Healthy Start and the Juvenile Crime Prevention Program, seek to prevent high-risk behavior among older children and adolescents. A focus group of professionals from juvenile justice, law enforcement, community youth programs, and education offers the following approaches to agencies and educational institutions in preventing youth violence and high-risk behavior: (1) develop community schools with integrated services; (2) offer individualized attention to troubled youth; (3) encourage schools and other programs serving youth to implement decision-making and values curricula; (4) make schools safe; and (5) coordinate programs among state agencies. (Includes two appendices explaining legislation, a list of major state programs, and 24 end notes.) (JW)

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CALIFORNIA CHILDREN
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ED 390 571

STOPPING THE VIOLENCE: CREATING SAFE PASSAGES FOR YOUTH

PS 023884

April 1995

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Assembly Office of Research

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Stopping the Violence:

Creating Safe Passages for Youth

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ASSEMBLY OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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April 1995

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Executive Summary 1

Stopping the Violence 8

- Causes of Youth Violence 9
- Programs for Young Adolescents 13
- Federal and State Programs 15
- Promising Programs 16
  - Healthy Start 16
  - Juvenile Crime Prevention Program 18

Creating Safe Passages for Youth 20

Appendix A -- 1993-94 Chaptered Legislation 31

Appendix B -- Major State Youth Programs 37

Endnotes 44

Executive Summary

Youth violence has now reached explosive levels in California. As either victims or perpetrators -- and sometimes both -- today's youth face more potential violence than any previous generation of California children. As victims: in 1992, there were 24,697 reports of child abuse of youth between ages 10 to 15; youth homicides rose from 492 to 828 between 1988 and 1991. As perpetrators: juvenile arrests for violent crime increased 64% between 1987 and 1992; middle and high school officials reported 69,191 assaults at school, and confiscated 5,107 guns and knives during the 1988-89 school year.

Current levels of violence are intolerable. During the past two years, the federal government, the California Legislature, and local governments have made great efforts to increase penalties and re-draw sentencing guidelines for juvenile crimes. Less attention has been focused on strategies to prevent juvenile violence and to stop troublesome pre-delinquent behavior from escalating into violent crime.

Although additional public funding has been provided for very young children, we have neglected older children and young adolescents between the ages of 9 and 15. This is the age group when violent tendencies and other troublesome behaviors are first expressed, and also when there is still time to intervene to prevent this behavior from becoming destructive to children and their communities.

Causes of Youth Violence

Why do some youth become violent or experience repeated victimization while others who grow up in similar environments do not? Recent studies report no simple answers, but identify a web of factors which interrelate to turn youth towards violence. Some of the key factors are described below:

Victimization and child abuse. Youth subjected to violence are more likely to engage in self-destructive behavior, such as premature sex, attempted suicide, and drug and alcohol abuse. These high-risk behaviors are often associated with both further victimization and aggressive behavior.

Domestic violence. Violence in the home against family members is strongly associated with youth violence. Observing brutality against a parent or being subject to continual harsh punishment may cause damage to development.

Unstable, violent neighborhoods. Both youth violence victims and perpetrators are more likely to live in violent, unstable neighborhoods. Rapid population turnover in these neighborhoods also prevents sustained contact with individuals or institutions which may deter youth from violence or build community responsibility.

Poverty and high unemployment. Neighborhood poverty and joblessness are associated with youth violence. The inability to obtain basic necessities may cause frustration which can easily explode into violence. Moreover, few youth find legitimate jobs in such surroundings.

Substance abuse. Alcohol and other drugs contribute directly to violence at any age. These drugs lower inhibitions and the ability to make rational decisions and deter risk-taking behaviors.

Easy access to guns. With nearly 49% of California households reporting possession of one or more firearms, and extremely high rates of stolen firearms, guns have become more accessible to young people. Guns are the leading cause of death among adolescents.

Television violence. Thirty years of study substantiates the relationship between exposure to TV violence and increased aggression, desensitization to violence, and fear among children.

Violent behavior usually does not occur in a vacuum. Nationally, approximately one in four children between ages 10 and 17 are considered high-risk because they display multiple problem behaviors such as school failure, substance abuse, and early unprotected sexual intercourse, as well as violent tendencies. Still, many youth who grow up in harsh, chaotic environments do not drop out of school or become violent or pregnant. Research on these youth has identified "resiliency factors," including the presence of 1) at least one nurturing adult in the environment; 2) a limited number of stressful events; 3) support systems such as youth programs in neighborhood churches or schools; 4) alternative caregivers such as grandparents or uncles; and 5) opportunities for team sports.

Researchers and professionals who work with youth on a daily basis are convinced of the need to address their problems as early as possible. Programs focused on very young children, such as home visiting, Head Start, and parent education, can prevent the troublesome behavior which may later turn into destructive acts. Late childhood

and early adolescence, from about age 9 to 15, however, is not too late to turn children away from destructive behaviors. Successful prevention and early intervention models for youth are designed to address, to the extent possible, the "resiliency factors" listed above. They also: involve families as well as the individual child; offer individualized attention and supportive role models; address the "whole" child, rather than a single problem; reflect the ethnicity and languages of the community; and create opportunities for youth to demonstrate growth and mastery, through leadership, decision-making, and community service.

Federal and State Youth Programs

The State of California and the federal government pay little attention to troubled youth 9 to 15 years old until they become part of the juvenile justice or child protective services systems. The few programs that exist are generally: spread thinly throughout the state; crisis- rather than prevention-oriented; client-specific, offering services only to "eligible" children and not their families; fragmented, providing a narrow band of services through specific agencies; and not held accountable for the results of their services. Two state programs, however, hold promise to prevent high-risk behavior among older children and young adolescents.

Healthy Start

The Healthy Start initiative, administered by the state Department of Education, offers grants to schools and local governments to establish programs which identify needs and deliver services to low-income children and families. Local "collaboratives" of local government, schools, parents, and community organizations jointly plan, determine community needs, and implement programs which integrate preventive educational, health, and human services at or near neighborhood schools. Staff are expected to reflect the ethnicity and languages of the neighborhood and to work with and

strengthen the family unit. Programs are required to assess the impact of their services in such areas as school attendance, academic success, student health, self-esteem, and family functioning. The first stage of a statewide evaluation found that after only one year, the program appeared to be making an impact on the problems of children and familes.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Program

The first 12 grants have recently been awarded for a new five-year, $10 million program administered by the Department of Social Services. The purpose of the program is to develop "a comprehensive and coordinated juvenile crime prevention strategy which is . . . family-focused and community based." Collaboratives of schools, local government social services agencies, community organizations, parents, and youth will establish Family Resource Centers. Each will include at least five components, including program coordination and services to the families of children ages birth to five years; an eight-week Family and Schools Together Program for families with elementary school children who are showing early at-risk behavior; a Mothers and Sons Program for single mothers and their sons ages 10 to 14 who have had school suspensions or been involved in gangs, bullying, or minor vandalism; a First Offenders and Family Preservation Program, offering intensive family counseling and social work services; and after-school recreational and educational services.

Creating Safe Passages for Youth

Many attempts have been made to address youth problems. To identify the most effective strategies, a focus group of professionals from law enforcement, juvenile justice, education, and community youth programs recently met. This group recommended five diverse approaches related to schools and state agencies which

could be implemented by the state, local government, and community agencies to prevent children with troublesome behavior from slipping into violence and delinquency.

1. **Encourage creation of community schools with integrated services.**

Neighborhood schools should be turned into community centers, open at least 16 hours a day to provide integrated social, health, recreational, counseling, parent education, and other preventive services, as well as education. The state and federal governments can encourage creation of community centers by expanding the Healthy Start Program, particularly to middle schools, junior high, and high schools; encouraging local schools to blend funds for education programs; and loosening funding restrictions and blending funds for health, human services, and juvenile crime prevention programs for children, youth, and families.

2. **Provide more individualized attention to troubled children and adolescents.**

Many children and adolescents who may become violent or may engage in other high-risk behaviors grow up in neighborhoods where there are few role models for responsible, successful adulthood. Creation of one-to-one "mentoring" relationships, which pair a young person with a caring adult, is a hallmark of many successful youth programs. The state, local governments, and private foundations can support mentoring programs by encouraging their inclusion in youth programs receiving their funding.

3. **Encourage schools, as well as programs serving youth, to implement values and decision-making curricula**. Many education and juvenile justice experts believe that "traditional" values, such as honesty, integrity, civic responsibility, family responsibility, respect for others, and self-respect, are no longer adequately passed along to children and youth. They believe, too, that much of the media extols wealth over integrity, chicanery over honest dealings, and personal freedom over

responsibility to family or community. They recommend that positive values and decision-making be intentionally taught and reinforced throughout school years. The state, communities, and private foundations can encourage values and decision-making curricula by including them in program funding priorities.

4. **Ensure that schools are safe places for children.** If there is any place that should be free of violence, it is the school. Yet violence in schools mirrors violence in the surrounding community. Additional action is needed to address violence both in schools and in surrounding areas, including: mandating and funding school safety plans and activities; restricting the number of establishments selling alcoholic beverages around schools; providing local government with more tools to quickly shut down "crack houses"; and increasing police patrols in and around schools.

5. **Coordinate Youth Programs Among State Agencies.** At least six state agencies administer programs for youth at risk of destructive behavior. There is substantial overlap and little coordination or joint policy development. Recently, an informal group of administration officials, known as the Principals Group, has worked together to address common issues regarding children and families. It is time to formalize this group, and add representatives of departments responsible for juvenile justice as well as the Legislature. This council would be charged with the responsibility to coordinate and streamline child, youth, and family policies.

These ideas could form the nucleus of a new state/local commitment to youth. Too many of California's youth are at risk of violence and other related destructive behaviors. If we are to stop the violence and truly ensure that our children can find safe passages to adulthood, we must act now.

Stopping the Violence:
Creating Safe Passages for Youth

Youth violence has now reached explosive levels in California. As either victims or perpetrators -- and sometimes both -- today's youth face more potential violence than any previous generation of California children.

As victims:

- In 1992, there were 24,697 reports of child abuse of youth between ages 10 to 15.[1]
- Youth homicides rose from 492 to 828 between 1988 and 1991.[2] Hispanic youth are almost two times, and African American almost four times as likely as white youth to be victims of homicide.[3]

As perpetrators:

- Juvenile arrests for violent crime increased 64% between 1987 and 1992.[4]
- Middle and high school officials reported 69,191 assaults at school, and confiscated 5,107 guns and knives during the 1988-89 school year.[5]

Current levels of violence clearly are intolerable. During the past two years, the California Legislature and local governments have made great efforts to increase penalties and re-draw sentencing guidelines for juvenile crimes. (See Appendix A for juvenile crime

laws passed by the California Legislature during the 1993-94 session.) Less attention has been focused on strategies to prevent juvenile violence and to stop troublesome pre-delinquent behavior from escalating into violent crime.

Although additional public funding has been provided over the last five years for "preventive programs" for very young children, we have neglected older children and young adolescents between the ages of 9 and 15. This is the age group when violent tendencies and other troublesome behaviors -- premature sex, experimentation with alcohol, tobacco and drugs, truancy, and school failure -- are first expressed. At this age there is still the opportunity for society to identify these children and intervene to prevent this behavior from becoming ingrained and destructive to both the children and their communities.

This paper will explore causes of juvenile violence and identify factors that appear to prevent destructive behavior. Characteristics of the programs that are particularly effective in reaching out to early adolescent youth will also be identified. Finally, we will offer a series of recommendations to prevent violence that are centered around the places youth spend most of their time -- their schools and the neighboring community.

Causes of Youth Violence

Why do some youth become violent or experience repeated victimization while others who grow up in similar environments become neither perpetrators nor victims? Recent studies report no simple answers. Instead, they identify a web of factors which somehow interrelate to turn youth towards victimization or perpetration of violence. Some of the key factors are described below:

Victimization and child abuse. Several studies suggest that abuse as a child makes the victim vulnerable to violence later. A 1993 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that youth subjected to violence are more likely to engage in self-destructive behavior, such as premature sex, attempted suicide, and drug and alcohol abuse.[6] While these high-risk behaviors in themselves may not be violent, they are often associated with both further victimization and aggressive behavior. Researchers have found that abuse may prevent victims from feeling empathy for others and diminish their ability to cope with stress. A second study, conducted in 1992 by the National Institute of Justice, looked for direct relationships between child abuse and violence. Findings were mixed. Although abused youth had a slightly higher rate of juvenile arrests and adult arrests for violent crimes, neither abused nor nonabused youth were more likely to continue a life of crime.[7] Thus, it appears that abuse alone neither leads to violence nor accounts for most violence.

Domestic violence. Violence in the home against family members is another powerful factor associated with youth violence. Observing brutality against a parent or being subject to continual harsh punishment may cause damage to a child's cognitive, psychological, and social development. Researchers believe that children subjected to domestic violence learn that violence is an acceptable way to cope or to gain control over another person.[8]

Unstable, violent neighborhoods. Both youth violence victims and perpetrators are more likely to live in violent, unstable neighborhoods. Violent environments may teach children that in order to survive, they must become predators. Rapid population turnover, characteristic of these neighborhoods, also prevents sustained contact with individuals or churches, community centers or other

institutions which may deter youth from violence or build a feeling of community responsibility. Studies show that when youth have no ties to their community, they are more likely to destroy it.[9]

Large numbers of single-parent families, which tend to cluster in these neighborhoods, also contribute to instability, as higher rates of juvenile delinquency are associated with high rates of single-parent families.[10] In such neighborhoods, few adult men may be present as models of responsible male behavior or to impose greater social control.

Poverty and high unemployment. Neighborhood poverty and joblessness are also associated with youth violence. The inability to obtain basic necessities may cause serious frustration which can easily explode into violence. Nor can many youth find legitimate jobs in such surroundings; California's youth unemployment rate has increased 81% since 1989, leaving 187,000 teens out of work.[11] Employment in the lucrative drug trade becomes a serious temptation.

Substance abuse. Alcohol and other drugs contribute directly to violence at any age. These drugs lower inhibitions and the ability to make rational decisions to deter risk-taking behaviors.

Alcohol is strongly implicated in crime and violence. In 80% of crimes, alcohol was used within the previous 72 hours. Moreover, young adults are more likely than others to have been drinking prior to being either the perpetrator or victim of fatal or nonfatal violence. When the supply of alcohol is reduced, the incidence of violence decreases; when it increases, violence increases.[12]

Illegal drugs are connected to crime and violence in three ways: through direct pharmacological/psychological effects; through the need to get money to support a drug habit; and, as a way of doing business in the drug industry.[13]

Easy access to guns. With nearly 49% of California households reporting possession of one or more firearms,[14] and extremely high rates of stolen firearms, guns have become more accessible to young people. Guns are the leading cause of death among adolescents; they account for 37% of all deaths in 1992 among California youth ages 10 to 25.[15]

Television violence. By the time the average child has completed 6th grade, he or she has witnessed 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence on television.[16] Thirty years of study substantiates the relationship between exposure to TV violence and increased aggression, desensitization to violence, and fear among children. As many as one-third of young male prisoners convicted of violent crime who responded to a recent American Medical Association survey reported that when they committed their crimes, they were consciously imitating techniques learned from television.[17] Prisoners interviewed by *Inside Journal* stated that many TV shows are so graphic and detailed that they are almost "how-to" manuals on crime.[18]

Research strongly suggests that there is no single cause of youth violence. The factors listed above, and others, interact in myriad ways. A composite portrait of violent youth frequently includes a history of abuse, harsh discipline, or rejection by parents. These youth tend to grow up in low-income, chaotic, often violent households with parents who are divorced or separated, use alcohol or other drugs, and lack training and opportunities to work.

One researcher has recently described certain typical developmental and behavioral pathways followed by young males who become delinquent and violent. Starting at about age 9, boys exhibit stubborn behavior, followed by lying and shoplifting. Around ages 11 and 12, defiance, minor aggression (annoying others and bullying), and property damage begins. After that, physical fighting, truancy, running away, and more serious delinquency and violence commences.[19] Comparable research has not been done on violent females.

It is clear that violent behavior usually does not occur in a vacuum. Many children whose behavior gradually turns from stubbornness to violence as they progress from childhood to adolescence also display warning signs of other high-risk problems. Nationally, approximately one in four children between ages 10 and 17 are considered high-risk because they display multiple problem behaviors such as school failure, substance abuse, and early unprotected sexual intercourse, as well as violent tendencies.[20] Still, many youth who grow up in harsh, chaotic environments do not drop out of school or become violent or pregnant. Research on these "resilient" youth has identified some factors associated with youth who do not adopt high-risk behavior. They include 1) the presence of at least one nurturing adult in the environment; 2) a limited number of stressful life events; 3) the presence of support systems such as youth programs in neighborhoods, churches, or schools; 4) having alternative caregivers such as grandparents, uncles, or others; and 5) involvement in team sports.[21]

Programs for Young Adolescents

Researchers and professionals who work with youth on a daily basis -- including teachers, social workers, early childhood educators, community workers, and others -- are convinced of the need to address multi-problem families as early as possible. Programs such as home visiting, Head Start, and other early childhood development

programs, parent education, and the state's Early Mental Health Program concentrate on children from birth to eight years and their families. We know that these programs can work to prevent the troublesome behavior which may later turn into destructive acts. We also know that because these programs are not accessible to more than a fraction of children and families in need, they need to be expanded.

Late childhood and early adolescence, from about age 9 to 15, however, is not too late to turn children away from destructive behaviors. Successful, although usually very small, "model" prevention and early intervention programs for youth have been established across the country. Virtually all of these programs design their programs to address, to the extent possible, the "resiliency factors" listed above. They also:

- Involve families as well as the individual child. Families are the first and most important providers for their children's needs. Their involvement and support is crucial to the child's success.

- Offer individualized attention and supportive role models who can build trust with the child and family.

- Address the "whole" child, not just a single problem such as low school achievement, experimentation with smoking or alcohol, or bullying other children. This necessitates coordinating a variety of services.

- Reflect the ethnicity and languages of the families and community where the child lives. Children are most comfortable when they can easily relate to program staff.

- Tailor programs to meet the individual needs of the local community. Local needs and priorities must be considered in program design and implementation.

- Create opportunities for growth and mastery, through youth leadership, development of decision-making skills, and community service.

Federal and State Programs

The State of California and the federal government pay little attention to troubled youth 9 to 15 years old until they become part of the juvenile justice or child protective services systems. Even then, services are sparse. For the most part, existing state and federally funded/state-administered programs for youth (see Appendix B) focus either on all children, through general K-12 education programs, or on older adolescents, who already exhibit acute high-risk behavior. Many programs are also restricted to a small number of locations.

Even where programs exist, however, most are:

- **Inaccessible**. Most programs for youth are spread thinly throughout the state.

- **Crisis oriented**. Most programs provide short-term assistance only for children with the most serious problems. Very few funds are available for sustained or follow-up assistance. For example, short-term counseling may be available for a runaway child, but long-term therapy is generally unavailable.

- **Client specific**. Services are limited to specific "eligible" children and rarely extend to related family problems. For example, a child habitually absent from

school might get counseling or academic assistance through a school drop-out prevention program, while the family problems causing the absences remain unaddressed.

- **Fragmented**. Programs are usually designed to provide a narrow band of services to targeted clients through specific agencies. Although some children or families may be eligible for and receive assistance from schools, health clinics, social services, child abuse, housing, and mental health agencies, coordination among those agencies is rare.

- **Not held accountable**. Most programs funded by state and federal funds are not held accountable for the results of their services and activities. Many programs do not require evaluations; if they do, units of service are counted (i.e., how many participants; how many sessions), not results.

- **Short-Term**. Most programs sponsored by government or private foundations are funded for too short a period (usually three years or less) to adequately determine their effectiveness. Program planning and implementation usually take 18 to 24 months, leaving only about a year to track program effectiveness.

Promising Programs

Two state programs, however, hold significant promise to prevent high-risk behavior among older children and young adolescents. These programs meet many of the criteria for successful youth programs: family involvement, prevention, ethnic and cultural sensitivity, a holistic approach to the child and family, and local program planning.

Healthy Start

The Healthy Start Support Services for Children Act, SB 620 (Chapter 759, *Statutes of 1991*), established a $20 million grant program for schools and local governments to establish school-linked integrated services initiatives. The program is funded and administered by the state Department of Education.

Healthy Start's goal is to establish a prevention-oriented system for identifying family needs and delivering services to low-income children and families with multiple educational, health, and social problems. The initiative is based on the premise that many children and youth come to school unable to learn due to multiple problems, ranging from hunger to health, to lack of a quiet place to study. Schools are in a unique position to ensure that children and youth gain access to needed services before problems require crisis intervention.

Healthy Start emphasizes working with and strengthening the family unit, not just the individual child. Families are partners in services rather than passive recipients of services offered by "professionals."

Local "collaboratives" composed of local government, schools, parents, and community organizations plan, determine priority needs for their school community, and are jointly responsible for planning and implementing programs which integrate educational, health, and human services at or near neighborhood schools. Each Healthy Start site must offer a minimum of four support services to students and their families. These are chosen from a comprehensive list including health services, counseling, parenting education, family preservation services, nutrition, mentoring, recreation, academic support, and others. In many cases, existing services offered by governmental or nonprofit agencies are brought to the

school site. Services must be coordinated, often through case management, to address student and family needs.

The governance and staff of every Healthy Start site is expected to reflect, to the extent possible, the ethnicity and culture of the community it serves. Local programs are also required to assess the impact of their services in such areas as school attendance, academic success, student health, self-esteem, and family functioning. The first stage of a statewide evaluation of the program showed that after only one year, participating schools appeared to be making an impact on the problems addressed by the program.[22] It is too early, however, to assess the long-term effects of Healthy Start.

During the first three years of the program, 235 operational grants have been awarded, serving 615 schools. Secondary schools, however, comprise fewer than one-third of participating schools. In order for Healthy Start to better serve youth ages 9 to 15, it must be expanded to more middle, junior high, and high schools.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Program

The first 12 grants have recently been awarded for a new 5-year, $10 million program administered and funded by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention of the Department of Social Services. The purpose of the program is to develop "a comprehensive and coordinated juvenile crime prevention strategy which is . . . family-focused and community based."[23]

Collaboratives of schools, local government social services agencies, community organizations, parents, and youth will establish Family Resource Centers in 12

communities. Each Family Resource Center will be designed to meet local needs, and will be required to include five components:

- **Family Resource Center.** This umbrella organization will coordinate and evaluate the various facets of the program. It will provide information and referral services, as well as a variety of health, child development, parent education, and support services to the families of children ages birth to five years.

- **Families and Schools Together (FAST).** This is a highly-structured eight-week program conducted jointly by schools, drug and alcohol prevention programs, parents, and community agencies. The purpose of FAST is to support families with elementary school children who are showing early at-risk behavior. Each session includes parent and child activities, a family dinner, and support groups for parents and children. Two years of follow-up activities are included. FAST programs in other states have shown excellent results in providing tools to work with difficult children and preventing further at-risk behavior.

- **Mothers and Sons Program.** Single mothers with their sons ages 10 to 14 who have had school suspensions or been involved in gangs, bullying, or minor vandalism, are targeted in this component. The program focuses on family responsibility and community involvement, and includes family preservation services, classroom and group training, and family support networks.

- **First Offenders and Family Preservation.** Intensive family counseling and social work services are provided for a three- to four-month period to youngsters who have had their first significant brush with the law. Follow-up and supportive services are offered for an additional six months.

- **After School Programs.** Recreational and educational services for youth (including community service) must also be included in local Family Resource Centers. These are expected to operate in partnership with existing community programs.

This program appears to provide an effective model to stop troublesome juvenile behavior before it becomes acute. However, the program must be evaluated before we can recommend expansion.

Creating Safe Passages for Youth

A recent focus group of professionals from law enforcement, juvenile justice, education, and community youth programs, who all have extensive experience working with youth, was asked what should be done to prevent children with troublesome behavior from slipping into violence and delinquency. After agreeing that relatively little attention was being focused on the age range from 9 to 15, when troublesome behavior often is first expressed, the group suggested five diverse approaches that state agencies, local governments, and community agencies could adopt to increase and improve services to youth.

1. Encourage creation of community schools with integrated services

Most programs serving youth are both inaccessible and generalized; they are not designed to meet the specific needs of the local community. One solution is to turn neighborhood schools into community centers, open 24 hours a day to provide integrated social, health, recreational, counseling, parent education, and other preventative services, as well as education, to the local community.

> O'Farrell Community School, a charter middle school in San Diego, includes many features of community schools. The school enrolls a diverse population of 1395 students in grades 6-8. The school is governed by a Community Council composed of the principal, teachers, parents, students, and representatives of community agencies. Specific decisions regarding discipline, scheduling, curriculum, and instructions are made by teachers in each of the 9 "Educational Families" of 150 students and 6 teachers. Social and health services are provided to students and their families through the Healthy Start Program.

The state and federal governments can encourage creation of community schools in several ways:

- Expand the Healthy Start Program. This program encourages creation of local collaboratives to meet the needs of children and families and provides a small amount of funding to "glue" together educational, health, and human services. In particular, legislation should be developed to offer incentives to middle schools, junior high and high schools to create new Healthy Start initiatives aimed at preventing high risk behavior among adolescents.

- Encourage local schools to blend funds for education programs. AB 777 (Chapter 100, *Statutes of 1981*), the School-Based Coordination Act, permits schools to use their categorical funds to implement innovative programs which focus on the specific needs of the school community. Schools should be encouraged to use this option and to measure program outcome.

- Loosen funding restrictions and blend funds for health, human services, and juvenile crime prevention programs for children, youth, and families. This will permit funds to be spent more effectively to meet local needs of low-income, multiproblem families and communities. In exchange for loosening funding restrictions, however, communities must show increased accountability for funds. They must develop plans for serving children and families, and to measure and document the outcomes of the services.

  An example of such an initiative is AB 1741 (Chapter 951, *Statutes of 1993*). This bill established a five-year pilot project which permits five counties to blend state funds for child and family services. The results of this pilot should provide the counties and the state with knowledge of how best to blend funds while retaining public accountability. Federal funds, however, remain tightly restricted. More flexibility is needed in federal programs to serve community needs more effectively.

2. Provide more individualized attention to troubled children and adolescents

Many children and adolescents who are at risk of violence or other high-risk behaviors grow up in impoverished neighborhoods where parents are highly stressed, and limited numbers of adults are available who can provide models of responsible adulthood and

successful living to youngsters. Creation of one-to-one "mentoring" relationships is a hallmark of many successful youth programs. Mentoring programs pair a young person with a caring adult who can offer emotional support, a sense of purpose and affirmation, and assistance in achieving positive goals.

They may be operated as one component of larger youth and family support programs, or independently. The effectiveness of these programs is dependent on careful matching of youths and adults, effective training of adult mentors, and commitment of both adult and youth to regular participation for a specific period of time.

Las Madrinas promotes leadership and school retention among young Hispanic women. Ahijadas ("goddaughters") are paired with Madrinas ("godmothers"), young working professional Hispanic women, for a 2-hour, bi-weekly, 30-week program. During their time together, the Ahijadas and Madrinas attend seminars and field trips; the young girls learn social and problem-solving skills through role playing activities, case studies and personal feedback.

The I Have a Dream Foundation was created by Frederick Lange in Harlem in 1981. Now spread throughout the U.S., it "adopts" sixth grade classes in low-income schools, provides academic assistance and other supports to the students, and provides a college scholarship to every child who graduates from high school. Project sponsors use small support groups of students convened by mentors, as well as other resources, to keep alive the children's dreams of success in school and life.

The Las Madrinas program of New York, and the I Have a Dream Foundation provide two examples of effective mentoring programs:

- The state can support mentoring programs by encouraging youth programs funded by the state to include such programs. Local governments and private foundations can also support mentoring programs.

3. Encourage schools, as well as programs serving youth, to implement values and decision-making curricula

Many education and juvenile justice experts believe that "traditional" values, such as honesty, integrity, civic responsibility, family responsibility, respect for others, and self-respect, are no longer adequately passed along to children and youth. They believe, too, that much of the media extols wealth over integrity, chicanery over honest dealings, and personal freedom over responsibility to family or community. They recommend that positive values and decision-making be intentionally taught and reinforced throughout school years.

> The *Choices* curricula for adolescent girls and *Challenges*, for adolescent boys, are offered by a variety of schools, local parks and recreation programs, and nonprofit community organizations. The programs, offered in workbook form and stressing class discussion, cover values clarification; sex-role stereotypes; stress management; goal-setting and decision-making; skill and aptitude analysis; financial planning; and career planning.
>
> The Rites of Passage/Manhood Development Program of Sacramento's Saint Paul Baptist Church offers a two-year program for African American 11 and 12-year-old boys to help negotiate the turbulent passage through adolescence to manhood. Adult men provide positive role models as well as instruction on the spiritual, family, emotional, and economic responsibilities of manhood. The curricula includes discussion of honesty, integrity, faithfulness, fairness, love, respect, citizenship, accountability, and pursuit of excellence. The program operates in the economically-depressed Oak Park neighborhood.

The *Choices* and *Challenges* curricula and the Rites of Passage/Manhood Development Program provide two examples of how schools and community organizations teach values and decision-making skills to young adolescents:

- State foundation and community funding priorities should include programs that instill traditional values.

4. Ensure that schools are safe places for children

If there is any place that should be free of violence, it should be schools. Yet schools cannot be separated from the surrounding communities; if there is violence in the neighborhood, it will be reflected in the schools. We should not be surprised that more and more children are bringing guns to school, claiming they are needed for personal protection.[24] In order to make schools safer places, we must take action to address violence both in schools and in surrounding areas.

- **Mandate and fund school safety plans and activities**

  Chapter 1253, *Statutes of 1989*, established legislative intent that all public schools, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, community leaders, parents, pupils, and others, develop school safety plans. These plans are intended to assess the current status of crime committed on school campuses and at school functions, and to develop strategies for implementing programs to maintain or improve school safety. To assist schools in developing plans, a planning guide was distributed, and 100 $5,000 grants were offered to schools on a competitive basis by the Department of Education.

Many schools throughout California have developed effective plans designed to meet the specific needs of their school communities. Most plans contain procedures to address potential problems such as gang activities, student and teacher injuries, and violent acts on school campuses. Many include zero-tolerance policies, which provide for student expulsion if drugs or weapons are found on campus. Other common features of school safety plans include crisis intervention, which provides counseling to students, staff, and families in the wake of trauma, and violence prevention initiatives such as adult-supervised "peer courts." Conflict resolution training, another effort included in school safety plans, will be increased substantially starting in the 1995-96 school year when the new Conflict Resolution and School Violence Grant Program established by SB 1255 - Hughes (Chapter 1022, *Statutes of 1994*) is implemented. This program allocates $5 million dollars annually for student and staff training in conflict resolution and other school safety efforts.

The development and implementation of school safety plans are not required, and even with this program, they remain inadequately funded. As a result, there is wide disparity among schools in their ability to deal with violence and other safety issues, or to provide students with skills to prevent conflict or violence.

- **Increase support of local efforts to suppress violence near schools**

  Since 1989, the Legislature has passed significant legislation to reduce the presence of both guns and illegal drugs near schools. State law now provides additional penalties for individuals convicted of possession or sale of drugs or guns near schools (Section 729.8, Welfare and Institutions Code, and Section 626.9 of the Penal Code). While these laws are important tools in fighting violence around

schools, many local school and law enforcement officials believe that additional actions are necessary:

- Restrict the number of establishments selling alcoholic beverages within a specific area around schools. The Alcoholic Beverage Control Act (Section 23789, Business and Professions Code) authorizes the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to refuse the issuance of new retail liquor licenses for any business within 600 feet of schools, public playgrounds, or nonprofit youth facilities. Businesses within these areas, however, may retain their licenses as long as there is no opposition from the community. If opposition surfaces, the arduous process to revoke liquor licenses requires a minimum of six months. Information on police complaints must be gathered and an investigation conducted before a business can be deemed a public nuisance and its liquor license revoked. Even then, the business owner may take the issue to court, further prolonging the process.

- Provide local government with more tools to quickly shut down "crack houses" near schools. "Crack houses," in which crack cocaine is sold and used, are menaces to surrounding neighborhoods. Yet shutting them down as a public nuisance can be a difficult, time-consuming process. Evidence must be gathered by law enforcement officials to prove that the house is used for illegal purposes. Then the owner, frequently an absentee landlord, must be notified and given the opportunity to correct the problem. The landlord also has the right to appeal condemnation of the house through the judicial system, which further prolongs the process.

- Recently, local governments have started using serious housing code violations as the basis for shutting down crack houses. This process leads to a much quicker condemnation of the house.

- Increase police patrols in communities near schools. Many communities have recently returned to neighborhood policing to combat crime. Officers assigned to specific neighborhoods are expected to become knowledgeable about crime and law enforcement issues in the community, and to work with the community to combat crime. These policies have been effective in reducing crime and increasing a sense of safety for residents. The 1994 federal crime bill (PL 103-322) provides $50 million to California to increase community policing programs.

- Increase police presence in schools. Many local governments are now assigning police officers to work in schools. Similar to neighborhood policing, officers are expected to get to know the students and to work with school officials to deter crime. Many law enforcement officials believe that the merey presence of a police officer on school campuses is effective in combatting crime in and around schools.

5. <u>Coordinate Youth Programs Among State Agencies</u>

At least six state agencies (the Department of Education, the Department of Social Services, the California Youth Authority, the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, the Department of Health Services, and the Health and Welfare Agency) fund or administer programs or services for youth at risk of destructive behavior. By all accounts, there is substantial overlap among the programs and little coordination or joint policy

development. The result is an administrative nightmare for local government officials and nonprofit organizations who must keep separate a myriad of eligibility, funding, reporting, and audit requirements.

Since 1975, there have been at least nine major legislative initiatives to coordinate all state agencies that administer services to children. All have failed due to "turf battles" over programs and funding, disputes over whether the coordinating structure should be a policy council or department, and because authority over children's issues is split among three constitutional officers -- the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Attorney General.

During the past three years, however, an informal group of administration officials has worked together to address common issues concerning Healthy Start, the Youth Pilot established under AB 1741, and other issues. This "Principals Group," which includes the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Secretary of Child Development and Education, the Secretary of the Health and Welfare Agency, and the directors of several departments within the Health and Welfare Agency, has slowly become a forum for working out common issues regarding children and family.

It is time to add representatives of departments responsible for juvenile justice and the Legislature to this group, and to formalize it as the State Child and Family Council. The council would be charged with the responsibility to coordinate and streamline child, youth, and family policies. Further, it would place responsibility for youth programs in a single place at the level of state government. The council would have the stature and authority to:

- Assist local communities to identify unmet needs of California children, youth, and families.

- Recommend budget priorities for child and youth issues to the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Attorney General, and the Legislature. Once budgetary approval is given, ensure that these priorities are followed by implementing agencies.

- Assist communities to develop prevention-oriented, coordinated delivery systems for child and youth services, based on local needs and conditions.

- Work with communities to blend state funds for child, youth, and family services, to the extent permitted by the state Constitution.

- Work closely with the federal government to ensure that federal programs do not preclude community efforts.

- Evaluate local child, youth, and family service systems based on obtaining improved outcomes for children and families.

- Aggressively advocate for children, youth, and families within state government and with the federal government.

These ideas could form the nucleus of a new state/local commitment to youth. Too many of California's youth are at risk of violence and other related destructive behaviors. If we are to stop the violence and truly ensure that our children can find safe passages to adulthood, we must act now.

APPENDIX A

1993-94 Chaptered Legislation

- **AB 645 (ALLEN): GUN-FREE SCHOOL ZONE ACT OF 1995**
  CHAPTER 1015

  This bill makes it a felony for anyone (except peace officers or those in life-threatening danger) to possess a firearm within a distance of 1,000 feet from the grounds of a public or private school where children are taught from grades 1 through 12. It carries a penalty of incarceration in a state prison.

- **AB 2428 (EPPLE): JUVENILE JUSTICE: TASK FORCE**
  CHAPTER 454

  This bill establishes the California Task Force to Review Juvenile Crime and the Juvenile Justice Response for the purpose of examining all aspects of juvenile law, finding creative solutions to California's juvenile justice problems, and making recommendations as to whether reform is needed.

- **AB 2516 (KATZ): EDUCATION: GANG RISK INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**
  CHAPTER 722

  This bill requires the California Department of Education to establish the Gang Risk Intervention Grant Programs.

- **AB 2543 (LEE): EDUCATION: CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS HATE REDUCTION ACT OF 1995, CHAPTER 1198**

  Enacts the California Schools Hate Violence Reduction Act of 1995 and includes causing, attempting to cause, threatening to cause, or participating in an act of hate violence among the grounds for suspension or expulsion of a pupil in grades 4 to 12.

- **AB 2658 (FRIEDMAN, B.): EDUCATION: TRUANCY**
  CHAPTER 1024

  Authorizes a school district to refer a truant pupil to the probation department for services, and authorizes a probation officer to refer the pupil to a truancy mediation program or to the juvenile court.

- **AB 2728 (FRIEDMAN): EDUCATION: SUSPENSIONS**
  CHAPTER 1016

  Authorizes schools to develop and implement in-school and in-house suspension programs; and promotes conferences among school staff, parents, pupils, counseling services, and study teams.

- **AB 2743 (CORTESE): AT-RISK PUPIL FUNDING**
  CHAPTER 94-363

  This bill requires the school site council to consult with local officials, law enforcement, and nonprofit organizations that work with youth who are at-risk before expending available funds used to motivate and support students on-site.

- **AB 2752 (ALLEN): EDUCATION: PUPIL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**
  CHAPTER 1017

  Expands the offenses for pupil suspension and expulsion to include intentional harassment, threats, and intimidation of a student or group of students.

- **AB 3053 (CONNOLLY): EDUCATION: CONFIDENTIALITY OF JUVENILE RECORDS, CHAPTER 1018**

  Makes several technical changes regarding the confidentiality of juvenile records, including the requirement that courts transmit written notices to school superintendents when a minor has committed a felony or specified offenses, and which contain only the offense committed and the disposition of the minor's case.

- **AB 3309 (TAKASUGI): EDUCATION: CONFIDENTIALITY OF JUVENILE RECORDS, CHAPTER 1019**

  Revises the law relating to the disclosure of juvenile court records and the confidentiality of reports.

- **AB 3457 (HARVEY): EDUCATION: RECORDS CHECK CHAPTER 1021**

  Authorizes school districts to request a records check of a prospective nonteaching volunteer aide from a local law enforcement agency to determine whether or not that person has been convicted of a sex offense.

- **AB 3550 (WOODRUFF): ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE: RUNAWAY/HOMELESS YOUTH, CHAPTER 962**

  This bill expands the substance-dependent homeless youth program to include the City and County of San Francisco for 2½ years. It also requires a separate contract with the substance-dependent homeless youth project in the County of Los Angeles and in the City and County of San Francisco.

- **AB 3669 (FERGUSON): EDUCATION: SCHOOL ACTIVITIES WITHIN JUVENILE FACILITIES, CHAPTER 1255**

  Creates a program, until January 1, 2000, in which financial assistance is given to county offices of education to operate school activities within existing juvenile camps, ranches, and boot camps, and requires the Department of the Youth Authority to evaluate and report its findings to the Governor and the Legislature.

- **AB 3816 (O'CONNELL): EDUCATION: PUPIL EXPULSION CHAPTER 1287**

  Provides that special restrictions and procedures relating to the expulsion of a pupil with exceptional needs shall apply only if mandated under federal law in the event that this pupil possesses a firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object at school or during a school activity off-campus.

- **SB 457 (PRESLEY): EDUCATION: HEALTHY START CHAPTER 1239**

  Makes several changes to the Healthy Start Support Services for Children Act, including eligibility requirements for schools to receive funding for free and reduced-price meal programs.

- **SB 1255 (HUGHES): EDUCATION: CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM , CHAPTER 1022**

  Creates the Conflict Resolution and School Violence Reduction Program in which funds are allocated to schools via grants for school safety programs.

SPECIAL SESSION BILLS

- **SB 1255 (HUGHES): CRIME AND VIOLENCE ON SCHOOL CAMPUSES**
  CHAPTER 1022

  This bill creates the Conflict Resolution and School Violence Reduction grant program and the School Safety Account. Starting in 1995, $5 million annually will be appropriated for the program.

- **SB 1728 (HUGHES): EDUCATION: TRUANCY**
  CHAPTER 1023

  Makes numerous changes to existing law relating to habitually truant pupils and increases the penalties, fines, and alternative education plans for these students.

- **SB 1848 (GREENE): SCHOOL SAFETY**
  CHAPTER 989

  This bill makes findings and declarations regarding the effect of school violence on pupil and staff and the importance of having culturally-appropriate mental health services available. It declares legislative intent to establish a supplementary victim assistance fund to be used for mental health services for victims of school-site tragedies and to encourage cultural awareness training among mental health professionals.

APPENDIX B

Major State Youth Programs

Homeless youth

Homeless Youth - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$883,000 (State Funds)

Provides a network of emergency services including outreach, services, food, and access to overnight shelters to homeless youth in San Francisco and Los Angeles counties.

Youth Emergency Telephone Referral - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$253,000 (State Funds)

Toll-free emergency referral service for runaway and homeless youth.

Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$981,000 (State Funds)

Provides 24-hour telephone crisis line, street outreach counseling, shelter, training in independent living skills, and access to medical and dental services for child victims of prostitution.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Suppression

Suppression of Drug Abuse in Schools - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$3,774,000 (State Funds)

Provides financial and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies and school districts to end drug use in and around schools.

Alcohol and Drug Program - Department of Education

$42,252,000 (Federal Funds)

Funds school-based alcohol and drug prevention and intervention services to children from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Healthy Kids, Healthy California - Department of Education

$54,631,063 (State Funds)

Provides school-based prevention and intervention in the areas of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, AIDs, nutrition, and health services.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment

Child Abuse Treatment - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$1,266,938 (Federal Funds)

Funds projects offering treatment to child victims of physical and sexual abuse. Such services include diagnostic and psychosocial assessments, individual, group and family therapy, etc.

Child Justice Act (OCJP) - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$1,045,000 (Federal Funds)

To improve the child abuse justice system, to limit the potential for re-traumatization of child victims, and to protect the rights of the accused.

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Training - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$672,000 (State Funds)

Provides training to criminal justice, social service, medical, and mental health providers from every county to treat and assist child abuse victims and their families.

Child Sexual Assault Prosecution - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$1,304,000 (State Funds)

Funds special units within the district attorneys' offices to vertically prosecute child abusers, increase sensitivity of prosecutors and investigators handling child victims, integrate victim services and prosecution efforts to minimize further trauma to the victim.

Office of Child Abuse Prevention - Department of Social Services

$20,213,000 (State Funds)

Provides grants to local child abuse prevention councils for prevention activities.

Pregnant and Parenting Minors

Pregnant Minors - Department of Education

$14,400,000 (State Funds)

Provides 2,674 pregnant students under age 18 with academic and necessary support services.

School Age Parenting and Infant Development - Department of Education

$7,900,000 (State Funds)

Provides 2,200 teen parents and 980 infants with parent education and child care on or near junior and senior high schools.

Adolescent Family Life Program - Department of Health Services

$10,000,000 (State and Federal Funds)

Case management program to assist pregnant and parenting teens to obtain needed health, educational, and social services.

Cal-Learn - Department of Social Services

$50,700,000 (State and Federal Funds)

Provides case management, child care, and transportation services to mothers under 18 who are in school and receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

School Drop-Out Prevention and Compensatory Education

Healthy Start - Department of Education

$19,000,000 (State Funds)

Expands the coordination and integration of health and social services for children at school sites.

Drop-Out Prevention Activities - Department of Education

$11,684,000 (State Funds)

Program to reduce school drop-out. Funds 1) youth advocates at elementary or junior high schools to mediate between parents and school officials; 2) high school Alternative

Education Work Centers which advocate for students; and 3) outreach to encourage students who have already dropped out to re-enter the school system.

Improving America's Schools Act - Department of Education

$1.9 Billion (Federal Funds)

The IASA supports efforts to help disadvantaged children meet federal education standards. It makes special and compensatory education funds (Chapter 1) contingent on strengthening school and community linkages and fosters integration with other health and social service programs where feasible. In addition, it adds violence prevention as a key element to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.

Delinquency Prevention

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$4,625,000 (Federal Funds)

In an effort to reduce juvenile crime, provides funding to community programs that promote education, training, diversion, research, treatment, rehabilitation, and delinquency prevention.

Midnight Basketball - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$150,000 (State Funds)

Provides one-time grants to the communities of San Francisco, San Diego, and Oceanside to fund midnight basketball programs.

Gang Violence Suppression - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$505,000 (Federal Funds)

Keeps lines of communication open among law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, community-based organizations, probation departments, community, schools, family of gang members, or potential gang members.

Community Delinquency Prevention - Office of Criminal Justice Planning

$1,515,000 (Federal Funds)

Encourages local government to work with other governmental and community agencies in implementing and maintaining crime prevention programs. Funds recruitment and training of volunteers in local crime prevention activities, and alcohol and other drug prevention activities.

Gang Risk Intervention - Department of Education

$1,900,000 (State Funds)

Offers grants to county Offices of Education to implement local community-based gang risk intervention programs.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Program - Department of Social Services

$10,000,000 (State Funds)

Supports 12 pilot programs, called the Family Resource Centers, to provide services intended to assist in the prevention of juvenile crimes.

School/Law Enforcement Partnerships - Department of Education and Office of the Attorney General

$628,000 (State Funds)

Provides technical assistance to local communities to develop partnerships and strategies to improve school safety.

Family Support

Family Preservation and Support Program - Department of Social Services

$16,631,924 (FY 1995, Federal Funds)

This program will provide California over $100 million over the next five years for family preservation and support services, including community-based prevention services which promote family stability. Federal law requires five-year plans and collaboration with other service providers in order to qualify for these funds.

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